Congratulations, Member Activists, Your Election Work Paid Dividends!!

*Cecily Hodges, President*

Thanks to our active and involved APEA members throughout the state, and especially in Fairbanks and MatSu Borough, we have just completed a very successful local election season. Thanks to the hard work of our activist members, our efforts helped to elect preferred, employee-friendly candidates to key borough positions in both Fairbanks and MatSu, where we have large, vital Locals and many members. These election victories were very significant. The opposition candidates had a clear and definite history of devaluing public employees who work in their jurisdictions, and the election of those candidates would have certainly resulted in the introduction of negative working conditions for our members – instead, thanks to our members hard work, anti-employee candidates were rejected and candidates who have demonstrated commitment to fair and equitable treatment of the staff were elected and have taken office in those communities.

These election successes should remind us that together we have power and the ability to favorably impact and influence our political lives, as well as our working lives. Together we can muster our strength and power and protect and advance our values and proper, equitable and respectful treatment in our work places.

Thank you, activists, for your good and successful work. Let us increase our engagement, grow our power and take our proper role to help lead our state to stability and affluence.

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**Alcohol and Drug Use at Work**

*Joel Hill, Southeast Field Representative*

Perhaps it is that time of year, or maybe you’re experiencing a rough patch on the roller coaster of life. Recently I’ve had several representational issues regarding alcohol and drug use at work.

Did you know you are subject to alcohol and drug testing based on reasonable suspicion?

Whether the substance abuse occurs at home or at work, those who abuse alcohol and drugs (including illegal drugs, prescription drugs, and over-the-counter drugs) can create significant issues for both employers and other employees. Additionally, having a hangover or coming down from drugs at work can be just as problematic as being intoxicated. Headaches, blurred vision, irritability, problems concentrating, and extreme tiredness can all create problems for you and your co-workers.

If you are going through a rough patch, utilize your resources. Many individuals

(Continued on page 3…)

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**APEA/AFT Reporter**

November 2015
Support Your Negotiating Team

Member support for their Local’s Negotiating Team is as critical an element to a successful negotiation outcome as is the Negotiating Team’s preparation and training. This is always and generally true of all contract negotiations, but member support is even more important here in Alaska because of the rather unique provision that financial terms may be approved, or rejected, year by year, each year of an existing labor agreement. We experienced that danger this past spring, when the State Legislature seriously considered rejecting the third year’s raises in the SU, CEA and university contracts.

The most essential component of our successful campaign to “win” the raises we had already negotiated was the members’ – your! – outcry and demand that the legislature fund our contracts as they had promised to do when they initially ratified the contracts. (By the way, that spring campaign for our contracts was a truly amazing accomplishment…and I sometimes wonder whether the members understand their huge accomplishment and dynamic exercise of power you exhibited in the campaign to secure those contracts – you all were amazing! And your success surprised a great many experts.)

It follows, then, that successful upcoming negotiations for SU, for CEA, for JESS, for JMHP, for KBEA, for ACE will be materially benefited by member support and activism on behalf of each Local’s Negotiating Team, even if that activism may involve group activity and “exploration” beyond an individual member’s “comfort zone.”

Winning a contract is a group effort, it requires support from the entire membership of the Local. During contract negotiations, please support your Local, your Negotiating Team and be willing to step out and up for a little excitement!

Kenai Borough Employees Association General Membership Meeting 10/2015

KBEA President Dan Nelson presides over the 3rd quarter KBEA General Membership Meeting. During the course of the meeting, Dan was sworn in as President, along with Vice President Ann Shinnberg, Secretary Julie Denison, and Treasurer Bruce Wall. Also in attendance were Employee Representatives Bill Anderson, Jacob Lautaret, Jeff Smardo, APEA staff members Jenn Madsen and Gene Christian. In a very productive meeting, Dan introduced many new positive proposals and constitutional amendments which were geared towards growing the union, promoting solidarity, and membership engagement.
JESS Gears Up for Negotiations

Dezarae Deraimer, Southeast Field Associate

During the last week of October, the president of the Juneau Education Support Staff (JESS), Cricket Curtain, spoke to 126 of the 285 members while visiting all of the 16 JESS work sites.

During the intense three day tour, Cricket, accompanied by Site Employee Reps, met with Paraeducators, IT, Maintenance, Custodians, RALLY, Admin, Nurses and the many other JESS members that the Juneau School District relies on. She spoke with them about how their school year has gone so far, plans for the upcoming 2016 JESS contract negotiations, JESS Shirt Wednesday, and invited them to the upcoming meetings.

The Executive Board has always held open monthly meetings, rotating between the valley and downtown. At the next meeting (November 18th, JDHS Room 206 at 5 pm), in addition to addressing regular union business, the board will be accepting nominations from the Site Reps for the negotiating team and hear member's contract ideas.

In show of solidarity, and especially with negotiations coming quickly, JESS members are asked to wear a JESS shirt every Wednesday. For those who do not have a JESS t-shirt or sweater, please contact your Employee Rep, Board Member or the APEA office (586-2334) for an order form. Or you can buy one at the next meeting (see you there!)

Alcohol and Drug Use at Work
(Continued from the front page…)

and families face a host of difficulties closely associated with problems, and these problems quite often spill over into the workplace. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is the most effective way to address issues. EAPs deal with all kinds of problems and provide short-term counseling, assessment, and referral with alcohol and drug abuse problems, also emotional and mental health problems, marital and family problems, financial problems, dependent care concerns, and other personal problems that can affect one’s work. EAP service is confidential.

Some facts about alcohol in the workplace:
• Workers with alcohol problems were 2.7 times more likely than workers without drinking problems to have injury-related absences.
• A hospital emergency department study showed that 35% of patients with an occupational injury were at-risk drinkers.
• Breathalyzer tests detected alcohol in 16% of emergency room patients injured at work.
• Analyses of workplace fatalities showed that at least 11% of the victims had been drinking.
• Large federal surveys show that 24% of workers report drinking during the workday at least once in the past year.

One-fifth of workers and managers across a wide range of industries and companies report that a coworker’s on- or off-the-job drinking jeopardized their own productivity and safety.

Some facts about drugs in the workplace:
• Workers who report having three or more jobs in the previous five years are about twice as likely to be current or past year users of illegal drugs as those who have had two or fewer jobs.
• 70% of the estimated 14.8 million Americans who use illegal drugs are employed.

Marijuana is the most commonly used and abused illegal drug by employees, followed by cocaine, with prescription drug use steadily increasing. Keep in mind that the State may have “legalized” personal marijuana use, but use remains a federal crime and use or impairment on the job has not been legalized.

The point is … if you think you need help or know a coworker who needs help, let them know about the EAP before you or your coworker find yourself in the position of having to call for representation.
Fairbanks North Star Borough Election Update

Northern Region APEA Chapter members went door to door on weekends as well as participated in several member-to-member phone banks for the October 6th election. Their efforts were successful in that all three major APEA/EPIC supported candidates won their elections. Karl Kassel won the seat of Borough Mayor with 58.3% of the vote. Van Lawrence and Kathryn Dodge were also reelected to their respective Borough Assembly seats. Van picked up 58% of the votes and Kathryn, 67%.

In a related note, former APEA FNSBEA member Santa Clause (who was formally named Thomas O’Connor until he legally changed his name) was elected in a write-in candidacy to a Council position with the City of North Pole.

City of Bethel Fills Officer Slates

The City of Bethel Employees Association, Local 6055 had a General Membership Meeting on October 20th to elect new officers and representatives. Gary Watson was elected President of the Local while Dave Stovner was elected Vice President. Gary and Dave (both from Public Works) were joined by Betsy Jumper (Admin.) who was re-elected to the Secretary/Treasurer position.

United Academics Adjuncts News

Northern Region Adjunct Vice-President Katie Boylan has taken a seat on the UAF Faculty Senate representing Adjuncts and at October’s meeting spoke about the problem’s some Adjuncts were having getting paid in a timely manner. Whereby Michael K. Powers, UAF Interim Chancellor spoke with Katie afterwards and asked for names of people having the problems so he could follow up.